

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for processing communications received by a user over a communications link, which communications include identification information, the apparatus comprising:

- (i) an input for receiving communications;
- (ii) extracting means for extracting identification information associated with a communication received at the input;
- (iii) categorizing means for categorizing the received communication based on the extracted identification information and recommending an action based on the categorization;
- (iv) means for monitoring user response to the communication and operable to measure the time taken for the user to review and/or respond to a communication;
- (v) modifying means for modifying the categorization of the categorizing means in accordance with a monitored user response to a the communication,

wherein, in response to receipt of a subsequent communication having identification information matching that of the earlier communication, the apparatus is operable to recommend an action based on the modified categorization.

2. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the extracting means includes comparing means for comparing the extracted identification information with a plurality

of predetermined identification information types so as to determine a match between one of the plurality of predetermined identification types and the extracted identification information.

3 (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 2, wherein the extracting means utilizes fuzzy logic to determine said match.

4. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the communications is either one of an email or a telephone call.

5. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 4, wherein the identification information includes at least one of:

- (a) a subject of the email;
- (b) an address of a sender of the email;
- (c) a recipient list of the email/ and/or
- (d) a calling line identifier.

6. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 2, wherein the comparing means is operable to compare any or all of:

- (a) a sender with a predetermined list of senders;
- (b) a recipient list with a predetermined list of recipients;
- (c) a subject with a predetermined list of subjects; and/or
- (d) a calling line identifier with a predetermined list of numbers.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus as in claim 1 wherein the categorizing means includes a Bayes net, which Bayes net is operable to output an array of values indicative of a

priority status for the first communication based on inputs indicative of the extracted identification information and the time taken for the user to review the ~~first~~ communication.

Claim 8 – cancelled.

9. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 1, further comprising means for automatic message transmission, such that when a communication is received from a sender that has been identified for automatic message transmission, a predetermined message is automatically returned in response to the communication.

10. (Previously Presented) A method of processing communications received by a user over a network, which communications include identification information, the method comprising :

- (i) extracting the identification information from a communication ;
- (ii) categorizing the communication based on the extracted identification information;
- (iii) observing time taken for the user to respond to the communication;
- (iv) modifying the categorization associated with the extracted identification information in accordance with the observed time taken for response; and
- (v) upon receipt of a subsequent communication having identical identifying information to that of an earlier communication, recommending a user action based on the modified categorization.

Claims 11-16 – cancelled.

17. (Previously Presented) A computer program comprising a set of instructions to cause a computer to perform the method defined in claim 10.

18. (Previously Presented) A computer program as in claim 17 placed on a carrier, which carrier includes any one of:

- (i) a CD-ROM storage medium;
- (ii) a hard disk drive storage medium;
- (iii) a 3.5 inch diskette storage medium;
- (iv) a protectively-encased tape cartridge storage medium;
- (v) a zip drive disk storage medium;
- (vi) a jazz drive diskette storage medium;
- (vii) an optical disk storage medium;
- (viii) auxiliary storage memory.

19. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 1 further comprising a diary for logging user availability, said categorizing means being triggered by a received communication to review a user's availability and to base a recommended response with respect to the received communication at least in part on said user availability.

20. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 1 further comprising means for storing user inputs with respect to extracted identification information.

21. (Previously Presented) Apparatus as in claim 19 wherein, in the case of at least one form of availability status, or where the stored identification information has been flagged by

a user input accordingly, the apparatus triggers the recommended response of the categorizing means without receiving user input.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 10 including the step of storing the observed time taken as a function of the extracted identification information.

23. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 22 in which said categorizing step (ii) includes:

(a) for at least one of the extracted identification information, retrieving stored time data associated therewith;

(b) operating the categorizing means in accordance with the extracted identification information and with the retrieved time data;

(c) examining an output from the categorizing means, which output includes a plurality of response identifiers corresponding to times for response; and

(d) extracting a response identifier corresponding to the highest value in said output.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 23 in which the categorizing means includes two Bayes nets, a first of which categorizes in accordance with the extracted identification information and a second of which categorizes in accordance with the retrieved time data, such that the operating step (b) comprises operating each of the first and second categorizing means and combining outputs therefrom.

25. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 24 in which said step (iv) of modifying the categorization associated with the extracted identification information includes modifying each of the first and second Bayes nets in accordance with the observed time.

26. (Previously Presented) A digital data carrier containing computer executable code for loading into a computer for the performance of the method of claim 10.